

REMARKS

I. Summary Of Office Action

Claims 1-35, 37-39, 41-44, 46, and 59-63 are pending in the above-identified patent application.

The Examiner objected to claims 16-24, 28-31, 33-35, and 37-39 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 6-9, 25, 32, 59, 60, and 62 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Centafanti U.S. patent No. 4,496,156 (hereinafter "Centafanti"). Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Centafanti in view of Official Notice. Claims 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Centafanti in view of Myers U.S. patent No. 3,893,669 (hereinafter "Myers"). Claims 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Centafanti in view of Myers and further in view of Official Notice. Claims 26, 27, 41-44, 46, 61, and 63 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Centafanti.

II. Summary Of Applicants' Reply To Office Action

Applicants have amended claims 1, 17, 18, 34, 37, 59, and 63 and cancelled claims 16 and 62. The Examiner's objection and rejections are respectfully traversed.

III. Applicants' Reply

A. Claims 1-35, 37-39, 41-44, And 46

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 6-9, 25, and 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Centafanti. Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Centafanti in view of Official Notice. Claims 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Centafanti in view of Myers. Claims 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Centafanti in view of Myers and further in view of Official Notice. Claims 26, 27, 41-44 and 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Centafanti.

However, the Examiner also indicated that claims 16-24, 28-31, 33-35, and 37-39 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Accordingly, applicants have cancelled claim 16 and incorporated the features of claim 16 into independent claim 1, from which claim 16 depends.*

Applicants have also amended claims 17, 18, and 37 to take into account the amendments to independent claim 1 and amended claim 34 to correct a minor typographical error.

In view of the foregoing, because the Examiner indicated that the features of claim 16 are allowable and because the features of claim 16 have been incorporated into independent claim 1, independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2-15, 17-35, 37-39, 41-44, 46, and 59-63 should be found allowable. Therefore, the rejections of claims 1-15, 17-35, 37-39, 41-44, 46, and 59-63 should be withdrawn.

* Applicants would like to point out that the Examiner's reasoning for finding allowable subject matter in the objected to claims appears relevant only to claims 28-31, and not to claims 16-24, 32-35, and 37-39. Nevertheless, applicants believe that the Examiner found the subject matter in claim 16 to be allowable as result of the arguments presented in the January 7, 2004 Reply to Office Action.

B. Claims 59-63

The Examiner rejected claims 59, 60, and 62 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Centafanti. Claims 61 and 63 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Centafanti. The Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants have amended claim 59 to incorporate features similar to the features that were incorporated into claim 1 as described above. In addition, applicants have cancelled claim 62 and incorporated the features of claim 62 into independent claim 59, from which claim 62 depends. As a result, claim 59 now further specifies that the ball mounting device comprises a support member and at least one tubular member adapted to rotate around the support member, where the at least one tubular member allows for releasable mounting of a ball.

Applicants have also amended claim 63 to take into account the amendments to independent claim 59.

At least because independent claim 59 was amended to incorporate features similar to the features of claim 16, applicants submit that independent claim 59 should be found allowable for similar reasons as to why independent claim 1 should be found allowable. Therefore, the rejection of independent claim 59 and dependent claims 60, 61, and 63 should be withdrawn.


IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, claims 1-15, 17-35, 37-39, 41-44, 46, 59-61, and 63 are in condition for allowance. This application is therefore in condition for allowance.

Application No. 09/627,146
Amendment Date April 19, 2004
Reply to Office Action of February 4, 2004

Reconsideration and allowance of the application are
respectfully requested.

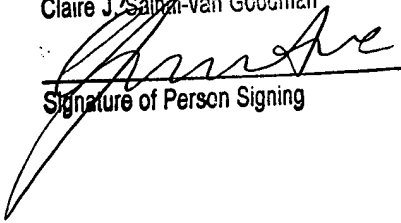
Respectfully submitted,



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